

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y TO ADD EO TAGS AND SUBJECT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: THE PSI: THE PERENNIAL HAMLET OF ITALIAN POLITICS

SUMMARY: IMPORTANT SOCIALIST (PSI) DIRECTORATE MEETING TODAY WILL PROBABLY PUT OFF UNTIL EARLY NEXT YEAR PARTY'S NATIONAL CONGRESS, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER. THE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN BOTH TO GIVE THE DC MORE TIME TO DETERMINE ITS FINAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SOCIALIST CONDITION OF ASSOCIATING THE COMMUNISTS (PCI) TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND TO POSTPONE THE SOCIALISTS OWN PAINFUL CHOICE AMONG OTHER ALTERNATIVES. THE PROGRESSIVE DISAPPEARANCE OF POLICY ISSUES BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS, AND PSI REACTION TO THE ELECTIONS OF JUNE 15, HAVE MOVED THE PSI MUCH CLOSER TO THE PCI. THIS IN TURN HAS NOW SPARKED CONCERN WITHIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY THAT IT MAY LOSE ITS IMAGE AS AN AUTONOMOUS FORCE. IT IS TOO EARLY YET TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS CONCERN GOES MUCH BEYOND PRE-CONGRESSIONAL MANEUVERING. IT DOES NOT INDICATE, AT LEAST SO FAR, ANY CHANGE IN THE PSI'S POSITION OF STASIS UNTIL THE DC DECIDES SOMETHING, OR UNTIL AFTER THE PSI'S CONGRESS.

END SUMMARY.

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1. SOCIALIST PARTY (PSI) BEGINS IMPORTANT MEETING OF DIRECTORATE SEPTEMBER 18 IN WHICH TIMING AND MODALITY OF CONGRESS AND PREPARATORY CENTRAL COMMITTEE ARE TO BE SET. ANNOUNCEMENT ALSO PUTS ON AGENDA THE FORTHCOMING LABOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND CONSIDERATION OF "NEW REALITY" CREATED IN MANY CITIES AND PROVINCES BY THE "COLLAPSE" OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.

2. CONGRESS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE POSTPONED FROM ITS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED DATE IN DECEMBER TO GIVE THE DC THE ADDITIONAL TIME IT CLEARLY NEEDS TO DEFINE ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PSI'S BASIC POLITICAL CONDITION FOR ITS RETURN TO FULL PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT, I.E., THE ASSOCIATION OF THE COMMUNISTS IN SOME WAY TO THE MAJORITY (ROME 10810). (THOUGH THE CONDITION IS GENERICALLY DEFINED, THE ONGOING POLITICAL DEBATE HAS PRODUCED ONLY ONE SPECIFIC FORM: COORDINATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM WITH THE PCI IN RETURN FOR PCI EXTERNAL SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNING COALITION.) A WIDE MAJORITY IN THE PSI IS DISPOSED TO BE PATIENT TOWARD THE DC BECAUSE THIS POSITION IS THE ONLY ONE WHICH AVOIDS THE AGONIZING CHOICE BETWEEN A RETURN TO AN ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS UNDER CONDITIONS OF INFERIORITY, OR A NEW IDENTIFICATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, WHICH ALL SOCIALISTS NOW BELIEVE TO BE ELECTORAL SUICIDE.

3. POSTPONEMENT OF THE CONGRESS WILL ALSO BUY THE DEMARTINO MAJORITY TIME TO TRY TO INCREASE ITS POLITICAL WEIGHT BY PICKING UP DISAFFECTED PARTS OF THE PSDI'S BASE, AND TO MASTER THE DEBATE OVER "ALTERNATIVES" NOW SPREADING WITHIN ITS RANKS. THE DEMARTINO MAJORITY IS ABOVE ALL ANXIOUS TO PROCEED TO A "NEW TYPE CONGRESS WITH A UNITARY SPIRIT."

4. THE DEBATE NOW BEGINNING TACITLY RECOGNIZES THAT THE PSI'S PRESENT STANCE TOWARD THE DC IS IN FACT ONLY A TEMPORIZING EXPEDIENT WHICH, EVEN IF ACCEPTED BY THE DC, CAN LAST ONLY TO THE NEXT ELECTORAL ENCOUNTER. IT THEREFORE GOES ON TO SHARPEN THE HORNS OF THE FEARFUL DILEMMA, MENTIONED ABOVE, PUT BEFORE THE PARTY BY THE RESULTS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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JUNE 15.

5. ONE, THE "GRAND ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT" (ALLIANCE WITH PCI) HAS NO SUPPORT WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP BEYOND ITS PERENNIAL PROPONENT, THE SMALL LEFT-WING LOMBARDI FACTION; BUT, AS LOMBARDI HAS RIGHTLY INSISTED, IT HAS MUCH WIDER SUPPORT AMONG THE PSI'S RANK-AND-FILE, MANY OF WHOM HAVE WORKED CONTINUOUSLY WITH THE PCI SINCE THE WAR IN

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS COOPERATIVES, RESISTANCE VETERANS, ETC. THE SAME PRESSURE FROM THE RANK-AND-FILE WHICH CREATED THE WAVE OF FRONTIST LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, EVEN IN PLACES WHERE THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE COMMUNISTS THEMSELVES WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THE "OPEN" CENTER-LEFT, IS NOW BEING FELT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. AS LOMBARDI HAS ALSO STATED, THE ELECTIONS OF JUNE 15 CONVERTED THIS ALTERNATIVE FROM A "HISTORIC" ONE FOR THE DISTANT FUTURE, TO WHICH DEMARTINO HAD RELEGATED IT, TO AN IMMINENT "POLITICAL" ONE.

6. THE OTHER "ALTERNATIVE," A RETURN TO A CLOSE ALLIANCE WITH THE DC IS, IN THE PRESENT POLITICAL CLIMATE, VIEWED AS NO ALTERNATIVE AT ALL. FOR THE PSI THE CENTER-LEFT (AS A BARRIER TO THE PCI) IS INDEED DEAD; SO DEAD THAT, AS ONE PROMINENT NENNI FOLLOWER REMARKED TO EMBOFF, EVEN ITS POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENTS ARE NO LONGER RECOGNIZED. THE BASIC RATIONALE IS THE PSI CONVICTION THAT ONLY BY DISASSOCIATION FROM THE DC CAN THE PSI GAIN AT THE POLLS.

7. BOTH THE INCREASED ATTRACTION OF THE "GRAND ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT" AND THE PSI'S REACTION TO THE ELECTION RESULTS HAVE MOVED THE PSI MUCH CLOSER TO THE PCI, AND IN OPEN ALLIANCE WITH IT AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS. THIS TREND WAS INDEED EVIDENT EVEN BEFORE THE JUNE ELECTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN JOINT PCI-PSI PARLIAMENTARY ACTION AGAINST PROVISIONS OF THE LAW ON PUBLIC ORDER.

8. THE CONSEQUENT PROGRESSIVE DISAPPEARANCE OF POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PSI AND PCI HAS INEVITABLY RAISED FEARS WITHIN THE PSI THAT IT WILL LOSE ITS IMAGE AS AN AUTONOMOUS FORCE, AND THEREFORE ITS ATTRACTION TO VOTERS.
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THESE FEARS ARE NOW BEING GIVEN FULL EXPRESSION, AND THE WORKING OUT OF AN "AUTONOMOUS" LINE OF ACTION, INDEPENDENT BOTH OF THE PCI AND THE DC, HAS BECOME FOR MANY THE PROPER "ALTERNATIVE" FOR THE SOCIALISTS TO PURSUE. THOUGH MORE ADVOCATES ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE TRADITIONALLY AUTONOMIST RIGHT (NENNI) WING OF THE PARTY, THIS CONCERN, WITH VARIATIONS, HAS BEEN EXPRESSED BY MANCINI, MEMBERS OF THE DEMARTINO MAJORITY, AND EVEN THE LOMBARDI LEFT WING. THE CONCERN HAS ALSO BEEN DISMISSED AS UNFOUNDED, BOTH BY SOME PSI SPOKESMEN (MANCA), AND BY THE PCI WHICH GENEROUSLY CREDITS ALL SOCIALIST CLAIMS TO ACTUAL AUTONOMY.

9. SO FAR, CONCERN FOR AUTHONOMY HAS NOT GONE BEYOND GENERALITIES, AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER IT HAS ANY MORE SUBSTANCE BEYOND PRE-CONGRESSIONAL MANEUVERING BOTH

BY DEMARTINO'S TRADITIONAL RIVAL MANCINI, AND SOME OF THE "FORTY-YEAR-OLD" ASPIRANTS TO HIS POSITION, E.G., DEPUTY SECRETARIES BETTINO CRAZI AND GIOVANNI MOSCA. ONE THING HOWEVER IS CLEAR: NONE OF ITS EXPONENTS, LEASE OF ALL MANCINI, HAVE, UNTIL YESTERDAY, SUGGESTED AN AUTONOMOUS LINE FOR THE PSI AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT POSITION OF STANDING PAT UNTIL THE DC AGREES TO ASSOCIATE THE PCI TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, OR AT LEAST UNTIL THE PSI'S CONGRESS. THE ONLY POSSIBLE EXCEPTION TO DATE IS GIOVANNI MOSCA WHO HAS JUST QUESTIONED THE "SUFFICIENCY" OF THE MORO GOVERNMENT UNTIL A PSI CONGRESS, AND THEREFORE THE WISDOM OF GIVING PRIORITY TO AVOIDING A CRISIS UNTIL IT IS HELD.

10. MEANWHILE, THE PSI'S POSITION IN THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM AND ITS PERENNIAL INDECISION GUARANTEE IT NO LACK OF SUTIORS. THE DC, SUPPORTED BY INDUSTRIAL ELEMENTS, IS

ACTIVELY ENGAGED TRYING TO GET IT TO COMPROMISE ITS DEMAND TO ASSOCIATE THE COMMUNISTS TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT; THE PCI IS WORKING TO TIGHTEN GROWING UNITY OF ACTION WITH THE PSI; BOTH THE DC AND PCI ARE JUDICIOUSLY CONSELING THE PSI, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, TO DO NOTHING WHICH COULD PRECIPITATE A GOVERNMENT CRISIS; SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PRESIDENT TANASSI HAS JUST SUGGESTED THAT THE TIME MAY NOW BE APPROACHING TO ACHIEVE (FINALLY) A SUCCESSFUL REUNION OF THE PSDI AND PSI
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(SPURNED SARCASTICALLY IN INITIAL PSI REACTION); AND THERE IS SPECULATION THAT BRITISH LABOR MINISTERS CALLAGHAN AND WEDGEWOOD BENN HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE MISSION BY THE NORTHERN SOCIALIST PARTIES TO WARN THEIR ITALIAN BRETHREN OF THE FOLLY OF WORKING WITH COMMUNISTS. DEMARTINO WENT TO VENICE T MEET WITH CALLAGHAN LAST WEEK; AND WEDGEWOOD BENN HAS JUST MET WITH NENNI (AND SARAGAT) IN ROME. VOLPE

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